

**Air Quality Conformity Task Force
Summary Meeting Notes
September 25, 2012**

Participants:

Dick Fahey – Caltrans

Ted Matley – FTA

Ginger Vagenas – EPA

Mike Brady – Caltrans

Lester Lee – Caltrans

Lauren Bobadilla – VTA

Greg Erhardt – Parsons Brinckerhoff

Scott Steinwert – Circle Point

Janet Adams – STA

Carolyn Clevenger – MTC

Lisa Klien – MTC

Stefanie Hom - MTC

Sri Srinivasan – MTC

Adam Crenshaw – MTC

- 1. Welcome and Self Introductions:** Stefanie Hom (MTC) called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. See attendance roster above.

Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA) was not in attendance at the meeting. Stefanie Hom (MTC) indicated that Stew would provide comments on the agenda items to the Task Force by the end of the week, or Friday, September 28, 2012. The Task Force members in attendance would make recommendations on projects, but final determinations would be made after Stew's comments were received.

- 2. PM_{2.5} Interagency Consultations**
 - a. PM_{2.5} Conformity Exempt List Review**

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA): Freeway Performance Initiative (FPI) Project Additions

Lauren Bobadilla (VTA) provided an overview of the project. As part of the Freeway Performance Initiative (FPI) Program, the project will install and widen on-ramps for ramp metering and install traffic operations system (TOS) at 15 locations throughout the Bay Area. This will improve operations, safety, and management of the Bay Area's freeway system. This project is similar to the 429 FPI Program projects that were determined not be a project of air quality concern by the Task Force in April 2011.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) indicated that the level of service (LOS) located on westbound SR 237 at Middlefield Road (ID 5) would decrease from D to E between the 2035 build and no build scenarios. The LOS at all the other locations would improve in the build scenario. Does the Middlefield Road location have a large number of trucks?

Lauren indicated that the truck volume in 2035 would be 40 trucks in the build scenario and 32 trucks in the no build scenario.

Mike indicated that he is not concerned about the LOS at the Middlefield Road location anymore, since the truck numbers are fairly small.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) indicated that there would be a 22 percent increase in truck traffic at Story Road in 2015 between the build and no build scenarios. The truck volume is small, but it is unusual that there is an increase in truck traffic. In 2035 there would be a decrease in truck traffic between build and no build.

Mike agreed that increase seems odd, but indicated that it might have something to do with the model. The truck numbers are low (below 100) for 24-hour projections.

Lester Lee (Caltrans) confirmed that numbers were taken from MTC's model, which he believes is for 24-hour projections.

Ginger indicated that the truck numbers are low, so the project would not be a project of air quality concern.

On September 26, 2012, Stew Sonnenberg emailed the Task Force and indicated that he believes this project is not a project of air quality concern.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans), Ted Matley (FTA), Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA), Ginger Vagenas (EPA), Mike Brady (Caltrans), and Stefanie Hom (MTC) agreed that the project is exempt.

Final Determination: FHWA, Caltrans, EPA, FTA, and MTC concurred that the project is exempt from PM2.5 project level analysis.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC): Regional Express Lanes Network Phase 1

Lisa Klein (MTC) and Scott Steinwert (Circle Point) provided an overview of the project. MTC, Caltrans, and other Bay Area agencies are pursuing development of an integrated system of express lanes to enhance mobility and travel time reliability. MTC and Caltrans have selected the following initial set of five freeway segments as the first phase of the Regional Express Lane Network (Phase 1 Project): westbound Bay Bridge approach, westbound San Mateo Bridge approach, westbound Dumbarton Bridge approach, I-680 between Alcosta Boulevard and Livorna Road, and I-880 between Hegenberger/Lewelling to SR 237. All five segments have existing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane facilities. The Phase 1 Project would convert these HOV lanes to express lanes; no added capacity would be needed. Existing HOV lanes are not transportation control measures (TCMs) required under the Clean Air Plan.

Greg Erhardt (Parsons Brinckerhoff) indicated that the AADT numbers came from Caltrans. They used 2010 conditions and pivoted off those conditions for their forecasts. They then used MTC's model to determine project vs. no project results. Greg added that there is some congestion relief in the general purpose lanes. Total traffic volumes in the corridors go up by a couple percent. Truck volumes go up slightly; trucks are not allowed in express lanes, but there is some congestion relief in the general purpose lanes.

Mike Brady (Caltrans) asked if any of these locations are TCMs as HOV lanes,

Scott Steinwert (Circle Point) responded that none of the HOV lanes are identified as TCMs.

Mike asked if they were accounting for diversion of HOVs from HOV lanes into mixed flow lanes because they won't want to pay the toll.

Greg responded that the HOVs would not be required to pay toll. So the assumption for the no build scenario is that HOVs would operate at the current occupancy requirement. In most cases it is 2+ occupants, so the model assumes those vehicles continue to go for free and would not be diverted into the general purpose lanes.

Mike asked if HOVs would need to pay tolls on the express lanes.

Greg responded no, HOVs would not need to pay tolls on the express lanes.

Lisa added that 2-person vehicles are not considered carpool at the Bay Bridge, but on these express lane segments, the carpool in this model is carpool today.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) indicated that the only location he noticed a big change in truck volumes was at the Bay Bridge approach. He was unsure if the increase would be from diversion, because he does not know where trucks would be diverting from. Would it be from induced demand? Or more travel in the peak hours because the general purpose lanes would be freed up?

Greg responded that the model is having trouble capturing the congestion at the Bay Bridge. So the model results are probably a little more sensitive than what would really happen. It is likely that in reality there is not going to be that high of an increase in truck traffic. So the numbers would be more of an upper bound.

Mike indicated that compared to 2010, it looks like there would be a decrease in trucks on the Bay Bridge.

Greg responded that the truck traffic would be reduced in some cases. The corridors may become more congested as we go forward so trucks would divert to less congested areas.

Mike indicated that truck percentages are staying constant but there are fluctuations in the numbers.

Mike questioned that if there is a change to operation capacity on a freeway with truck numbers that are already over the criteria, then are we concerned with if the change is a project of air quality concern, or are we looking at the project as a whole?

Ginger responded that that hasn't always been clear. EPA is looking more at the change rather than the fact that the project is occurring on a freeway with high numbers. They provide a bit more scrutiny, but they are trying to ensure the change between the build and no build scenarios is not significant.

Mike indicated that the change in truck numbers for this project is not significant.

Ginger agreed with Mike. She discussed this project with the Office of Transportation and Air Quality (OTAC) and determined it would not be a project of air quality concern.

On September 26, 2012, Stew Sonnenberg emailed the Task Force and indicated that he believes this project is not a project of air quality concern.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans), Ted Matley (FTA), Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA), Ginger Vagenas (EPA), Mike Brady (Caltrans), and Stefanie Hom (MTC) agreed that the project is exempt.

Final Determination: FHWA, Caltrans, EPA, FTA, and MTC concurred that the project is exempt from PM_{2.5} project level analysis.

Solano Transportation Authority (STA): I-80 Express Lane Conversion

Scott Steinwert (Circle Point) provided an overview of the project. The Solano Transportation Authority (STA) proposes to construct westbound and eastbound express lanes along approximately 18 miles of I-80 in Solano County. The project consists of a west segment and east segment. The west segment extends along I-80 from the Red Top Road interchange to the Air Base Parkway interchange; the existing HOV lanes in both the eastbound and westbound directions would be converted to HOV/express lanes. The east segment would extend from Air Base Parkway through the I-80/I-505 interchange in Vacaville; new HOV/express lanes in both the eastbound and westbound directions of I-80 would be constructed in the freeway median.

Greg Erhardt (Parsons Brinckerhoff) indicated that the truck numbers came from the California Highway Performance Measurement System (PeMS) data for 2010. The analysis shifts some traffic from the general purpose lanes to HOV lanes. Growth in traffic is different between the build and no build scenarios.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) indicated that truck volumes are low and do not seem to change, so he believes the project is not a project of air quality concern.

Mike asked if this project is a TCM.

Scott responded that no, the project is not a TCM and that HOVs would continue to be free in the express lanes.

Ginger indicated that this project is not a project of air quality concern.

On September 26, 2012, Stew Sonnenberg emailed the Task Force and indicated that he believes this project is not a project of air quality concern.

Dick Fahey (Caltrans), Ted Matley (FTA), Stew Sonnenberg (FHWA), Ginger Vagenas (EPA), Mike Brady (Caltrans), and Stefanie Hom (MTC) agreed that the project is exempt.

Final Determination: FHWA, Caltrans, EPA, FTA, and MTC concurred that the project is exempt from PM_{2.5} project level analysis.

b. Confirm Projects are Exempt from PM_{2.5} Conformity

There were no comments on the exempt list.

Final Determination: FHWA, Caltrans, EPA, FTA, and MTC concurred that the projects on the exempt list are exempt from PM2.5 project level analysis.

3. Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 11-28 (Final)

Sri Srinivasan (MTC) indicated that the adoption of the 2013 TIP has been postponed to align with the adoption of Plan Bay Area. The TIP Amendment 11-28 is a subset of the list that the Task Force saw last month. The only difference is the addition of four projects for which the region received FHWA funds, but those four projects are consistent with the Transportation-2035 (T-2035) RTP.

Stefanie indicated the Transportation Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the TIP Amendment 11-28 is similar to what the Task Force has seen in the past meetings, except for the four additional projects identified in the memo.

Dick asked if the four additional projects are all included in T-2035.

Sri confirmed that all the projects are included in T-2035.

Stefanie indicated that the TIP Amendment 11-28 is going to the Commission tomorrow for approval.

Dick asked for clarification on the Safety Improvements – SHOPP Collision Reduction project (RTPID 230713). The project is listed as SHOPP Collision Reduction, but exempt under pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation. Should the exemption code be changed to safety?

Sri indicated that Mike Brady clarified that the safety improvement exemption should only be used on HSIP improvement projects.

4. Consent Calendar

a. August 23, 2012 Air Quality Conformity Task Force Meeting Summary

There were no comments on the consent calendar.

5. Information Items

a. Plan Bay Area: Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping Feedback and Alternatives

There were no comments on the informational items.

6. Other Items

The next Air Quality Conformity Task Force meeting is October 25, 2012.